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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Brief Report on National Displaced Persons Conference^{1/}

Representatives from 24 States, from several voluntary agencies working on the displaced persons program, and from several Federal Government agencies, attended the displaced persons conference in Chicago last week. Working groups developed reports on various phases of operations, but time did not permit reconciliation of some conflicting elements in these reports. That reconciliation will be undertaken here next week by a representative group from the conference, and a formal conference report will be issued very soon thereafter. We hope to obtain copies of this report for you.

A few salient facts about the program may be helpful. The Displaced Persons Act authorizes the immigration and placement of 205,000 of these persons in this country by June 30, 1950. To the end of March 1949, approximately 15,000 persons had been brought in. However, the program of actual movement is just getting under way in significant numbers, and it is hoped that by July this year there will be a movement of 16,000 a month. After the receipt in the European office of an assurance from an American sponsor, several weeks are required to conduct the necessary investigations, locate qualified displaced persons, make medical examinations, and get the necessary civil clearance papers. Experience to date has shown that detailed specifications in assurances offered sometimes make it extremely difficult to find an individual or family meeting all the requirements outlined. Transportation to the United States is provided displaced persons in the order that they reach the port of debarkation, and no guarantees can be provided as to how soon a displaced person or family can be made available. A large percentage of the persons thus far moved to this country have been those with relatives here who have requested them by name and those whose immigration has been facilitated by the several voluntary agencies assisting in the program. The bulk of future immigrants under the program will be those requested largely on the basis of occupational abilities.

As far as Extension assistance in the program is concerned, several of the committee reports recognized the need for help from Extension in getting assurances from rural areas and in the orientation of the displaced persons upon their arrival. However, there was general agreement that Extension activities could best be tied in with the work of State committees established by State governors to facilitate this program. Such committees have now been established in 24 States. Where such committees do not exist or are not formed in the near future, Extension can make a helpful contribution through working with the various church groups and other voluntary agencies that are actively engaged in the program.

^{1/} By P. V. Kepner, who represented the Cooperative Extension Service

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